

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper

Final Interim Measures

Frequently Asked Questions

October 2007



What is an interim measure?

- The Secretary of Commerce may implement interim measures to reduce overfishing until such measures can be replaced by a fishery management plan (FMP), FMP amendment, or regulations taking remedial action.
- These measures may remain in effect for no more than 180 days, but may be extended for an additional 186 days if the public has had an opportunity to comment on the measures and a fishery management council is actively preparing measures to address overfishing on a permanent basis.

Why did NOAA Fisheries Service implement interim measures in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper and shrimp fisheries?

- NOAA Fisheries Service determined interim measures were needed to temporarily address overfishing of red snapper in 2007 while the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) developed additional, long-term measures to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock.

What final interim measures did NOAA Fisheries Service implement?

- In summary, the final interim measures:
 - Reduced the commercial red snapper minimum size limit from 15 inches to 13 inches total length;
 - Established a goal to reduce red snapper bycatch mortality in the shrimp fishery to 50 percent of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003;
 - Reduced the total allowable catch quota (TAC) of red snapper from 9.12 million pounds (mp) to 6.5 mp, resulting in a commercial red snapper quota of 3.315 mp and a recreational red snapper quota of 3.185 mp;
 - Reduced the recreational red snapper bag limit from four fish to two fish per person per day; and
 - Prohibited the captain and crew of for-hire vessels from retaining the recreational bag limit.

MANAGEMENT ACTION	PREVIOUS MEASURE (STATUS QUO)	NEW INTERIM MEASURE	
		EFFECTIVE APRIL 2, 2007	EFFECTIVE MAY 2, 2007
Reduce commercial red snapper minimum size limit	15" total length	13" total length	
Establish red snapper bycatch mortality reduction goal for shrimp fishery			50% of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003
Reduce red snapper total allowable catch	9.12 mp (4.65 mp commercial; 4.47 recreational)		6.5 mp (3.315 commercial/ 3.185 recreational)
Reduce recreational red snapper bag limit	4 fish/person/day (also applies to captain & crew of for-hire vessels)		2 fish/person/day (0 fish/person/day for captain & crew of for-hire vessels)

When did NOAA Fisheries Service implement interim measures in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper and shrimp fisheries?

- The final rule for the interim measures published on April 2, 2007.
- Measures to reduce the commercial red snapper minimum size limit from 15 inches to 13 inches total length were effective April 2, 2007.
- All other measures (see table above) were effective May 2, 2007.

When will the interim measures expire?

- The interim measures were extended on September 24, 2007, and are effective through March 28, 2008.

What is the status of Gulf Council action to develop additional, long-term measures to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock?

- In June 2007, the Gulf Council approved long-term measures to reduce red snapper harvest and bycatch. These measures are proposed in the joint Amendment 27 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Amendment 14 to the Shrimp FMP (Amendment 27/14), which is currently under Secretarial review.
- For more information on these proposed measures, see link below.

Links to additional information on red snapper management and rulemaking

- Red snapper assessment process and reports (http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/Sedar_Workshops.jsp?WorkshopNum=07)
- Amendment 27/14 (http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/Amendment_27_14.htm)
- Commercial red snapper IFQ program (<https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>)